

IN THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of all claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein comprising an amino acid modification at C221S and I247E and at least one further amino acid modification selected from the group consisting of: R223M, R223E, R223Q, H225T, H225N, H225E, H225R, E226Q, E226D, E226R, Q237T, Q237K, Q237E, E269R, E269T, E269Q and E269K, as compared to amino acids 68-317 (SEQ ID NO: 1) of full-length wild-type human RANKL.
2. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant RANKL protein further comprises at least one set of amino acid modifications selected from the group consisting of:
 - a) one of H225T, H225N, H225E, or H225R and one of E269R, E269T, E269Q or E269K; or
 - b) one of H225T, H225N, H225E, or H225R and one of E226Q, E226D, or E226R.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant RANKL protein comprises amino acid modifications at C221S and I247E and at least one further set of amino acid modifications selected from the group consisting of: a) H225E and E269K, or b) H225R and E269K.
5. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant RANKL protein comprises amino acid modifications at C221S and I247E and at least one further amino acid modification selected from the group consisting of: R223Q, E226R, Q237K, E269T, and E269Q.
- 6.-10. (Cancelled)
11. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant RANKL protein further comprises at least one amino acid modification selected from the group consisting of: a) R223M, R223E, or R223Q; b) Q237T, Q237K, or Q237E; c) H225T, H225N, H225E, or H225R; d) E269R, E269T, E269Q or E269K, and e) E226Q, E226D, or E226R.
12. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 11, wherein said variant RANKL protein further comprises amino acid modifications at one of H225T, H225N, H225E, or H225R and one of E269R, E269T, E269Q or E269K.

13. (Cancelled)
14. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 11, wherein said variant RANKL protein comprises amino acid modifications at C221S and I247E and at least one further set of amino acid modification at H225R and E269K.
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Currently Amended) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant RANKL protein further comprises at least one modification selected from the group consisting of: H225T, H225N, H225E, H225R, ~~H225K~~ E226Q, E226D, E226R, E269R, E269T, E269Q and E269K.
- 17.-18. (Cancelled)
19. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 16, wherein said variant RANKL protein comprises amino acid modifications at C221S and I247E and at least one further amino acid modification or set of amino acid modifications selected from the group consisting of: H225T, H225N, H225E, H225R, E226Q, E269R, E269K, (H225E and E269K), and (H225R and E269K).
- 20.-22. (Cancelled)
23. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant RANKL protein comprises amino acid modifications C221S and I247E and at least one further amino acid modification selected from the group consisting of: R223M, R223E, H225T, H225N, H225E, H225R, E226Q, E226D, Q237K, Q237E, E269R, E269T, E269Q, and E269K.
- 24.-25. (Cancelled)
26. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant RANKL protein comprises amino acid modifications C221S and I247E and at least one further amino acid modification selected from the group consisting of: R223M, R223E, R223Q, E226R, Q237K, E269T, and E269Q.
- 27.-29. (Cancelled)
30. (Original) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 1, wherein said variant protein is chemically modified.

31. (Previously Presented) A variant RANKL protein according to claim 30, wherein said chemical modification is selected from the group consisting of: PEGylation and glycosylation.
32. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a variant RANKL protein according to claim 1 and a pharmaceutical carrier.
33. (Cancelled)